



DES LEAN Team

Case Study # 2012-02



Summary

Scope: Wastewater Engineering Bureau

Business Problem:

Personnel turnover within the Wastewater Engineering Bureau (WEB) and the passage of several decades made State Revolving Fund processes variable between staff and not as efficient as they should be.

Methodology:

The current process was discussed and mapped. The overall process was found to be sound. Specific points for improvements were identified. A quick-hitting implementation plan was established with volunteers for each item. Customers of WEB's loans & staff of the Drinking Water SRF loan program participated.

Solution:

Improvements will be made to write down all important processes; increase the use of electronic documents; and to expand the use of the existing (USEPA-supplied) database. Better information will be supplied to applicants in a timelier manner to help improve the quality of documents DES receives.

Benefits/Results:

Having processes written down will ensure that the work can continue more efficiently through any future personnel changes. Increased use of electronic documents & signatures will make all projects move faster.

Idea Sponsor:

Paul Heitzler, WEB Administrator

Lean Event Facilitation:

Bob Minicucci x 2941
Jacob Bernauer x 1376

Project Name: Applying Lean Concepts to the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund

The Problem

The process for obtaining loans from the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) was established in 1989. The program has expanded greatly since with few changes being made to the administrative process along the way. An almost 100% personnel turnover made it clear that written procedures and process improvements were required to ensure the continuity of the program. WEB staff attending Certified Public Manager classes with a City of Nashua Wastewater Treatment Plant official identified this as a project that needed to be done. This fund processes an average \$30M million dollars per year, and needs to do it well.

Streamlining the process will benefit the many participants in the CWSRF program as well as the effective management of the funds.

The Process

WEB staff, customers of the process, and staff from Drinking Water & Groundwater Bureau (DWGWB), who run a similar revolving loan fund, met and mapped out the current system from receipt of an application for funding to the first disbursement of funds after the project has started.

While this brought everyone new understanding, the overall process was found to be quite good.

Participation by representatives of the Cities of Concord & Nashua, frequent customers of the revolving loan funds, and by Underwood Engineers, Inc., who prepare many application & reimbursement packages, was invaluable.

Ten separate areas for improvement were identified. Periodically, project updates were given to the Project Sponsor, who was actively engaged in details of the project.

The Results

Work was assigned to make improvements in these areas:

"I'm a strong believer that the best solutions are those that result from the collaborative process. The SRF event serves as a perfect example."

Paul Heitzler, Administrator
Wastewater Engineering Bureau and
Sponsor of this project

- Procedures will be written down to ensure repeatability and standardization.
- Improvements will be made to the instructions given to loan applicants
- A template for better project kick-off meetings and a seminar for consultants & loan applicants will be set up.
- Tweaks will be made to the use of electronic documents, especially documents leaving DES.
- USEPA's database contractor will be contacted to see if the overall database for Revolving Loan Fund can be improved.
- The range of allowable use of electronic signatures for documents will be clarified.
- Coordination with WEB's Construction Section will be examined to ensure that work actually done is paid for as efficiently as possible, especially with regard to Change Orders.

The Team

(WEB staff unless noted)

Event Co-Managers:

Gloria Andrews, Beth Malcolm, Tracy Wood
John Adie, City of Nashua

Team Members:

John Adie, Gloria Andrews, Dan Dudley (DWGWB), Dan Fenno, Brian LeBrun (City of Concord), Beth Malcolm, Keith Pratt (Underwood Eng.) Rick Skarinka (DWGWB), James Tilley, Adam Torrey (DWGWB), Frank Underwood (Underwood Eng.), Laura Weit-Marcum, Tracy Wood.